

## FOLKWAYS

321. Illustrations from ethnography. The Papuans on Geelvink Bay, New Guinea, say that " children are a burden. We become tired of them. They destroy us." The women practice abortion to such an extent that the rate of increase of the population is very small and in some places there is a lack of women.<sup>1</sup> Throughout Dutch New Guinea the women will not rear more than two or three children each.<sup>2</sup> In fact, it is said of the whole island that the people love their children but fear that the food supply will be insufficient, or they seek ease and shirk the trouble of rearing children.<sup>3</sup> In German Melanesia the custom is current. Although many Europeans live with native women, few crossbreeds are to be seen.<sup>4</sup> Codrington<sup>5</sup> gives as reasons: " If a woman did not want the trouble of bringing up a child, desired to appear young, was afraid her husband might think the birth before its time, or wished to spite her husband." Ling Roth<sup>6</sup> quotes Low that the Dyaks never resort to wilful miscarriage, but this statement must be restricted to some of them. Perelaer<sup>7</sup> says that even married women do it and employ harmful means. The Atchinese practice abortion both before marriage and in marriage. It is a matter of course.<sup>8</sup> The women of Central Celebes will not bear children, and use abortion to avoid it, lest the perineum be torn,—\* < a thing which they consider the greatest shame for a woman." <sup>9</sup> If an unmarried woman of the Djakun, on the peninsula of Malacca, used abortion, she lost all standing in the tribe. Women despised her ; no man would marry her, and she might be degraded by a punishment inflicted by her parents. Married women practiced it sometimes to avoid the strain of bearing children, but, if detected, they might be beaten by the husbands, even to death. In the neighboring tribe of the Orang Laut no means of abortion was known. " Such an abomination was not regarded as possible." <sup>10</sup> These tribes on Malacca are very low in grade of civilization. They are aborigines who have been displaced and depressed. The people of Nukuoro are all of good physique, large, and well formed. They have a food supply in excess of their wants and are well nourished. The population has decreased in recent years, by reason of the killing of children before or after birth.<sup>11</sup> On the New Britain islands the women dislike to become

mothers soon after marriage. Generally it is from two to four years before a child is born.<sup>12</sup> On the New Hebrides the women employ abortion for egoistic reasons, and miscarriage is often produced by climbing trees and carrying heavy loads.<sup>13</sup> The inhabitants of the New Hebrides

<sup>1</sup> Rosenberg, *Geelvinkbaai*, 91. <sup>7</sup> *Dajaks*, 37.

<sup>2</sup> <sup>Krieger, *Nieu-Guinea*, 390.</sup> <sup>8</sup> Snouck-

Hurgronje, *De Atjehers* I, 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 165. <sup>9</sup> *Bijdragen tot T. L. en V.-kunde*, XXXV, 79.

\* Pfeil, *Ans der Sudsee*, 31. \*° *Ztsft.f. EthnoL*, XXVIII, 186.

<sup>4</sup> <sup>Melanesians</sup>, 229. <sup>n</sup> Kubary, *Nukuoro*, 9,

12, 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Sarawak*, I, 101. 12 JAL, XVIII,

291.

<sup>18</sup> *Austral. Assoc. Adv. Sci.*, 1892, 704.